

# Why teens need up to 10 hours' sleep

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Credit: Flinders University

Technology, other distractions and staying up late make it difficult, but researchers say teenagers need to make time for 8-10 hours of sleep a night to optimise their performance and maintain good health and wellbeing.

As soon as teens get less than nine hours sleep, attention deficits accumulate and jetlag-type behaviour starts to kick in – putting them at risk of poor performance at school and even personal injury through accidents, including [car crashes](#) if they drive.

Young people who do not get enough sleep can also find their sleep patterns worsen.

"Who cares? Well, most adolescents worldwide do not obtain sleep in the recommended range of 8 to 10 hours per night," says Dr. Michelle Short, who conducted a nine-night sleep study on 34 teenagers aged 15-17 at the Flinders Child and Adolescent Sleep Clinic.

"Adolescents require more sleep for optimal functioning than typically obtained.

"Our study of [sleep deprivation](#) in controlled conditions shows that this clearly affects the ability to function well as well as their mental health and sense of wellbeing.

"Feeling sleepy, poor cognitive performance and bad [sleep patterns](#) can also lead to elevated risk of injury or even death, particularly among learner drivers," Dr. Short warns.



Dr Michelle Short at the Child and Adolescent Sleep Clinic at Flinders University.

After school holidays, and several months of sleeping in, Dr. Short says it could take time to re-establish a good routine for the [body clock](#) to swing into a healthy sleep range for rising early for school, university or work.

"Our bodies and brains need the right amount of sleep, so we need to wind back the body clock into the Adelaide time zone," she says.

Signs that your teen may have a problem with their [sleep](#) include if they:

1. Are sleepy or fatigued during the day,
2. need an alarm (or parent) to wake up on [school](#) days,
3. fall asleep too quickly (30m), or
4. find it very difficult to wake in the morning.

The paper, "Estimating Adolescent Sleep Need Using Dose-Response Modelling," has been published in the journal *Sleep* (Oxford University Press).

**More information:** Michelle A Short et al. Estimating adolescent sleep need using dose-response modeling, *Sleep* (2018). [DOI: 10.1093/sleep/zsy011](#)

Provided by Flinders University

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